



THE JOY OF FRANCIS

Secular Franciscan Order | St. Francis Region #52 | Southern California,



Minister's Message

By Sylvia Paoli OFS, Regional Minister

This is the first Joy of Francis regional newsletter appearing on-line. Your Regional Executive Council voted to abandon the printed version and try an on-line version as an experiment in cutting costs and still reaching everyone in the Region. We hope this will be even more successful in that second goal of reaching everyone. With the printed copy, the copies were mailed to each minister in the Region to distribute to those in his/her fraternity. Unfortunately, we know that not everyone received a copy. That included those who might have been absent the day the newsletters were distributed, the homebound and those otherwise excused from meetings. There was also sometimes a big time delay between the time the newsletter was actually printed and mailed to the time when it actually was distributed within fraternities.

With every method of distribution there are disadvantages. In the case of the on-line version, we know that not everyone has a computer. However, we are earnestly asking the councils in each fraternity to *make sure enough newsletters are printed from the on-line version to distribute to those of your fraternity without computers.*

We'd like to hear from you as to your likes or dislikes of this new way of doing things. However, let's be good Franciscans and acknowledge the fact that change is ongoing, and give it a chance, if your only complaint is the difference in its form. You can mail

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comments, as well as articles for future issues, to the Communications Coordinator/Editor, Ed Graff at: edwgraff@gmail.com, or to anyone on the Regional Council.

Ecce quam bonum et quam jucundum habitare fratres in unum!

2012 Quinquennial Celebration

The Dinner Party

*By Judith Mussatto OFS
Holy Spirit Fraternity, Claremont CA*

Quinquennial XVII (2012) ("Q") opened with a sit down dinner on Tuesday July 3rd, before, during and after which there were many hugs, kisses and shouts of joy as we were reconnecting with people we have met over the years at quinquennials and national formation workshops. We met new members of the family and became excited to meet and sometimes share a meal with some of the rock stars in our Franciscan family: Minister General, Encarnación del Pozo OFS, Keynote speakers: Sr. Ilia Delio, OSF, Ed Shirley, OFS, († August 2012), Br. Bill Short, OFM, Pat Brandwein-Ball, OFS, St. Francis Region's own rock star, Fr. Stephen Gross, OFM, Conv.

At Friday's liturgy, the presider was Fr. Lester Bach, OFM Cap. Yes, that rock star, author of *The Franciscan Journey* and many other publications that have helped form and transform many of us. The Gospel was Matthew 9: 8-13.

In his homily, first, Fr. Lester asked us to imagine being at a dinner party. That was easy. We had been having wonderful dinners, in good company with great conversation. Next, he introduced the other guests and asked us to reflect quietly on our reactions, on learning who the other guests were: A gay man and his partner, an ex-communicated Jew, and someone of another faith who did not believe in the Resurrection. Definitely not people we had been shearing meals with at the "Q".

Then, he read from Article #13 of our Rule of 1978.

As the Father sees in every person the features of his Son, the first-born of many brothers and sisters, so the Secular Franciscans with a gentle and courteous spirit accept all people as a gift of the Lord and an image of Christ....

Finally, we were reminded that Secular Franciscans are to present to the world the merciful face of the Church and if during the time of reflection on the presence of the other guests at table, we found something that was not quite on target with the Gospel, then we need some conversion. We need to learn the meaning of the words: "*I desire mercy, not sacrifice.*" Mat 9:13.



"Secular Franciscans are to present to the world the merciful face of the Church."

2012 Quinquennial Celebration



There are no words adequate to convey to you the joy, the intellectual stimulation, the sheer delight in meeting old friends that one receives when attending a Quinquennial celebration. One of the most powerful presentations I've heard was Sr. Ilia Delio's first talk the morning of July 4, 2012. There were so many thoughts presented in her talk that I can't begin to cover them all in a short article, so I will just highlight a few of them.

The world is not poor; it is rich in God's goodness. The goodness is in the heart of the world. Our call is to name the good that is already there, not to turn evil into good. To do that, we first have to find the goodness in ourselves. Poverty, humility, and charity mark everything that is good. What fills us inwardly must be shown outwardly. It's not how we pray, nor what we do nor how we do it. It's how we experience the reality of Jesus in our life.

Franciscan Gospel life is: (1) focus on Christ; (2) naming the good; (3) witnessing to God's love. To do that we need to live the "P-C" life: Penance - conversion; poverty - contemplation; piety - compassion. In penance - conversion, we must turn from self-centeredness to God-centeredness. It involves two conversions: the first is from "I" to "it" and the second is from "I" to "thou" - in other words, from being focused on *things* to being focused on *relationships*.

Poverty does not mean living without things, but without *possessing* things. Possessive power

makes true communication between persons impossible. We need to live without possessing "things", which includes not possessing things like hurts, feelings, and thoughts. Poverty is the sister of humility, meaning we have two feet on the ground, and can love and care for one another. The contemplation that is made possible when we truly do not possess things is a way of life, not a style of prayer. In the act of contemplation we hand ourselves over to God, and have a vision of truth which leads to love. We are always centered on the crucified Christ.

Compassion is the quivering of the heart in response to another's suffering. It brings healing to the heart. There is no true love of God and neighbor without true love of oneself. We must see the love of God and Jesus and *become* that love to each other. Then we will always *be* there for each person we meet.

What does an evangelical person do or look like? That person (1) prays; (2) experiences conversion and conversation with God and with others; (3) is a prophetic witness; (4) celebrates the gift of God's goodness; (5) lives according to the Gospel and bears witness to the Gospel; and (6) incarnates the Word of God through poverty, humility, compassion, mercy and crucified love. We must be a sign, a symbol, and give witness by our lives. We must allow the love of Christ to live in us.

2012 Quinquennial Celebration



Reunion & Affirmation

By Margarita Rodriguez OFS, Councilor, St. Francis Region

There are two words that come to mind in describing the 2012 Quinquennial (The "Q") "Reunion" and "Affirmation".

The "Q" was like a family Reunion. I felt this throughout the entire week.

Brother Bill Short gave us a beautiful history lesson of the Order putting our OFS in context of that history. He began by saying that we are an "interactive" family. What one branch does affects the other branches.

Although the majority of us were OFS we had brothers and sisters from the other branches the First, Second, Third orders of our Church. However, we also had Franciscan brothers and sisters outside the Catholic Church present. I had the pleasure of having a Franciscan sister who was a deacon in her denomination as part of my "Q" fraternity members.

The "Q" fraternities were formed so that we could have a smaller fraternity experience in which to share the topics and questions after our talks. You know that as Franciscans we were able to bond with our "Q" fraternity in a very short amount of time and it gave us an opportunity to get to know some new family members a little better. I know that if God enables me to attend the next "Q" I will recognize them there and hopefully remember their names.

The other aspect of the "Q" that impacted me was the affirmation I feel our Region received through the week in the topics and talks.

Certainly the talks given by Sr. Ilia Delio and Brother Bill Short were alone worth the trip. However, I was impressed by the affirmation that I felt sensing that our own St. Francis Region is not too far off the mark in getting our formation act together. All the talks had elements of topics we have already approached and addressed in our own Region as important details and aspects of formation that we need. The fact that about 38 people from our Region were present is a testament to that understanding of who we are and especially where we are in the family constellation that is the Family of Francis.

The icing on the cake was sharing that week with our International Minister, Encarnacion del Pozo OFS, Minister General, Doug Clorey OFS, Vice Minister General, Fr. Amando Trujillo Cano TOR, General Assistant of the OFS-YouFra.

Being able to meet and talk to our international minister was a special blessing for many of us who had the chance to do so up close and personal. This was truly a Family Reunion that I thank God that I was able to experience.

Many times throughout the week I prayed for all of us in the Region missing you and praying that we would be able to bring back a little piece of the joy we experienced. We may never be able to gather so many of us together at one time until we gather with our Lord and Father Francis himself, but I think we had a little glimpse of what a fraternity gathering in heaven will be like.

2012 Quinquennial Celebration

Reunión y Afirmación

Para Margarita Rodriguez OFS, Councilor, St. Francis Region

Dos palabras que vienen a la mente hablando del Quinquenio 2012 (El "Q" al describir el "Q" son "Reunión y "Afirmación".

El "Q" fue una verdadera reunión de familia. El hermano Bill Short nos dio una hermosa clase breve sobre historia de nuestra familia Franciscana, poniendo nuestro OFS en el contexto de esa historia. Empezó diciendo que somos una familia "interactiva". Lo que una rama de la familia hace afecta las otras.

Por supuesto, la mayoría de nosotros presente éramos OFS pero hubieron hermanos y a hermanas de las otras ramas (Primera, Segunda y Tercera órdenes) presente de nuestra Iglesia pero también hermanos franciscanos fuera de la Iglesia Católica. Tuve el placer de tener una hermana franciscano que es diacona en su denominación como la parte de mi Fraternidad "Q".

Nos pusieron en fraternidades pequeñas durante la semana para poder tener una experiencia de fraternidad en que compartir los temas y las preguntas después de nuestros talleres. Sabe que como franciscanos no tuvimos problema en vincular con nuestra fraternidad "Q" en poco tiempo y nos dio la oportunidad de poder conocer por lo menos algunos nuevos miembros de la familia un poco mejor. Sé que si Dios me permite a asistir el próximo "Q" los reconoceré aunque quizás no recuerde sus nombres.

El otro aspecto de la "Q" que me impresionó fue la afirmación que sentía que nuestra Región recibió durante la semana. Aunque los talleres de Sr. Iliá Delio y Hermano Bill valieron el viaje, pienso que nuestra Región no está muy lejos de la marca respeto a nuestros esfuerzos sobre la formación. Todos los talleres tuvieron elementos que ya empezamos a tocar como detalles y aspectos importantes de formación que necesitamos en nuestra Región.

El hecho de que aproximadamente 38 personas de nuestra Región estuvieron presente es un testamento que estamos más cerca a una comprensión de quienes somos y especialmente nuestro propio lugar en la constelación familiar que es la Familia que empezó Francisco.

El glaseado en el pastel fue compartir esta semana con nuestros Ministros Internacionales, Encarnación del Pozo OFS, Ministra General, Doug Clorey OFS, Vice Ministro General, Padre Amando Trujillo Cano TOR, Asistente General de OFS-YouFra. Poder hablar con nuestra ministra internacional fue una bendición especial para muchos de nosotros que tuvimos la oportunidad de hablar con ella.

Esto fue sinceramente una Reunión Familiar que le doy gracias a Dios que pude experimentar. Muchas veces a través de la semana yo oraba para todos de nuestra Región y pidiéndole al Señor que nos ayudara poder traer un pedacito pequeño de la alegría que experimentamos todos juntos.

Quizás nunca estaremos juntos tantos a la vez hasta el día que lo compartamos con nuestro Señor y Francisco mismo, pero pienso que tuvimos por lo menos una vislumbre pequeña de lo que será una reunión de fraternidad en el cielo.



2012 Quinquennial Celebration

This was my first “Q” and I was a little nervous about going. So many Secular Franciscans, for so many days and many, many new faces. When all was said and done, there was very little to have been worried about. The men

The “Q” *By Frank Miller OFS*

and women of our Order are as diverse as the states they came from. The most significant thing wasn't our differences, but our similarities and sharing in the charism and spirituality to which we were each called by vocation. The celebration of Mass, the participation in the daily prayers, and the attention given to each wonderful speaker were the glue that bound us together. From our most senior professed sister, to the wonderful young people experiencing the joy of Francis for the first time, the days of the “Q” were a bouquet of grace and blessing.

As someone who has, for the last three years, been preparing for certification as a Lay Spiritual Assistant for the St. Francis Region, I particularly enjoyed being invited to attend the gatherings of Spiritual Assistants from across the country. I heard these men and women speak from a passionate heart about the successes and challenges they experience in their regional communities. It was comforting to know that there are so many others who come to this service from a place of humility; wanting to give back to an Order they obviously love. They want to live their personal relationship with Christ, as did Francis, by sharing their gifts of time and talent. I know that, as I find my place in serving our Order, I will think back to these brothers and sisters, and find comfort in knowing that I don't walk the road alone.

I was looking forward to going to the “Q” this year. There are always so many things that I enjoy at the “Q”. However, I would like to focus on the two most important things that I brought home from the “Q”.

First, Br. Bill Short, OFM, is always a joy to hear. He brings things that are always

so important to being Franciscan. His topic this year was Franciscan History. His presentation of our history really touched me. As he related story after story, I realized how blessed we are to be Franciscans. Our Friars, Clares and Seculars, lived through many hard times, but yet, they always found a way to live in Franciscan joy, no matter how difficult things got. When I began reflecting on our history, I realized that I needed to know where we had been to really know where we are going. There is good news for St. Francis Region. Sylvia Paoli, OFS, our Regional Minister, has arranged for Br. Bill Short, OFM, to be our speaker at our Malibu weekend in May of 2013. Thank you Sylvia!

Secondly, I was elated with spending time with 6 other Seculars, from 6 other Regions, in small group discussions. We all had different roots, but were so much alike in our visions. The depth of understanding our journey, and being so open with each other, sharing our thoughts and responses to the presentations, created some beautiful on-going conversion.

Having been Regional Minister from 2000 to 2009, I met many brothers and sisters at the NAFRA meeting each year. It was so special to me, to renew my friendship with so many of my brothers and sisters while I was there. Many of us had been called to other tasks of serving our Lord and following Francis.

Our Blessings *Made Clear*

By Rock DeSpain OFS
Regional Spiritual Assistant



2012 Quinquennial Celebration

Start The Journey

By Bob Herbelin OFS

The 2012 Quinquennial Congress provided time for learning. We heard excellent speakers talking about Why Francis, his thoughts and beliefs, the theology that comes from those beliefs, and the development of the Order. We heard about our gift, our vocation, our call, a call that keeps on calling. We shared fraternal life in small fraternities that grew within a few days. Then we heard what it was all about!

The last presenter was Pat Brandwein-Ball who gave us the challenge of the Quinquennial: the real purpose of what we are about and what we are to do; what will we bring back from the Quinquennial. She did not have a power point presentation. She did not cover a lot of facts. She simply told us: Life in Christ deals with the Commandments and the social teachings of the Church which now belong to everyone.

We now have our documents. We have been redefined. We have been commissioned by the Church. Yes, it took time to promulgate the Rule. It wasn't until later that we had the Constitutions, which give structure and explain the Rule. These documents brought about a change in how we did things - a change in the way we live as Franciscans and in the way we are to take charge. What will we do with them? How will we internalize them? We need to read, study and pray our documents!

She told us how we can discern what to do, how we had the ability to get in touch with God, with ourselves and with others, and where we could find answers and direction. We are no longer isolated individuals or fraternities.

Being Franciscan is something we live, not something we put on and take off.

Then she told us to "Start the Journey". There was no value to the Quinquennial if we did not bring this back to our fraternities and to the world.

She spoke from the heart and expects us to do the same. That is how we will change the world.





Thirty Years A Secular Franciscan

This is a report from the June 24, 2012 combined Fraternity Meeting with St. Francis Fraternity-HB and St. Joseph the Worker Emerging Fraternity in Santa Ana. Gabriel Jon is a member of the eastern Melkite rite. He follows a special Rule of Life, an adapted Rule of St. Clare, approved by the Ab-bess of one of the Clare monasteries. He was granted permission to live as a monastic under the former Bishop of the Melkites, Newton Diocese.

I am so appreciative of how you all remembered me in celebration of 30 years of Profession within the Franciscan family. Every anniversary is truly a celebration for the entire order reaching back to its members from the beginning all the way through to those yet to come. It is an acknowledgment of a spiritual family within the Church that just continues to increase throughout time. We all share and celebrate one another's legacies. I am glad that we were able to gather on the same day as the anniversary of Linda and her late husband, God grant him eternal peace. And then to learn at the same gathering of the recently professed marriage vows of our brother and sister, Jim and Rita; God grant them many happy years together. It was so good to feel so much love from everyone present at the Franciscan gathering. How did you all enjoy that rosary made up of tiger eye stone beads that our sister Elizabeth provided to me as a Fraternity gift? It sounded so beautiful the way it was described to me. Another act of love! I love hearing the words of the cards that were given to me. Thank you all and God bless you for your presence and participation.

Know that I have you in my prayers.

With love from your little brother in Jesus and His saint, Francis,

Gabriel Jon, OFS

1st Row left to right: (1) SA-Charlene Hansen, (2) HB-Angie Garcia OFS, (3) HB-Gloria Padron OFS, (4) HB-Brother Gabriel Jon OFS, (5) HB-Rita Reinker OFS, (6) HB-Puring Chang OFS, (7) HB-Luz Gonzales, (8) SA-Leader Maggie Tapper OFS (not shown); 2nd Row left to right: (9) HB-Bernard "Skip" Bowman OFS, (10) HB-Spiritual Assistant Dan Abalos OFS, (11) HB-Gail Judkins OFS, (12) SA-Ralph Moreno OFS, (13) Regional JPIC Coordinator Elenita L'Esperance OFS, (14) SA-Ray Aguilera, (15) SA-Nick Gaspar, (16) SA-Mark Drozd OFS, (17) HB-James Egan, (18) HB-Linda M. Nelson OFS.



FIVE PROFESSIONS And Butterflies Too!

By Bob Murray OFS

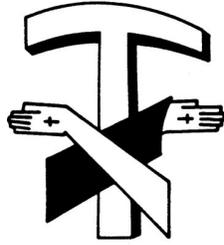
It was a warm summer morning in San Juan Capistrano, Saturday, August 18th... actually we were in the middle of an extended heat wave. Three fraternities from our Region were gathered at the Old Mission San Juan Capistrano in the renowned "Serra Chapel" at 11:00 A.M. to witness the Permanent Profession of five OFS Candidates. Arriving early, several members prepared the hall for the reception and light lunch and to make ready for many of our sisters and brothers and their guests to arrive. About 70 men and women were in attendance, including the Ministers and Formation Directors of each fraternity and Sister Sam Settar, OSF, one of the few assigned Spiritual Assistants to a fraternity in the St. Francis Region.

Fr. Steve Gross, OFM Conv., assisted by Deacon David Sire, OFS, presided over the Profession Mass and was the Official Church Witness for the professions. Following the Mass and Profession Rite, we left the chapel and entered the Mission Courtyard where we were greeted by nature at its very finest: not only by the beauty of trees providing shade and flowers filling the scene with color but by Monarch Butterflies, some of God's most beautiful, graceful and softly flying crea-

Left to right: **Paul Kelly OFS** and **Cyndie Dunkerson OFS** of San Juan Capistrano Fraternity; **Julie Bash OFS** of Padre Pio Fraternity; **Tina Gath OFS** and **Terrie Moore OFS** of St. Maximilian Kolbe Fraternity.

tures. It was as though the angels were making themselves visible to us as we celebrated God's blessings. To have so many newly professed at one time was truly a blessing... and the experience of several fraternities celebrating a Permanent Profession Rite together was invigorating; their coming together for such an occasion reinforced the reality that we are a world-wide Order, not just a stand-alone fraternity.

Congratulations to each of you who were professed that beautiful morning, but a word of reminder: as you have heard before, your profession was not a graduation exercise but the beginning of your life's journey as a Secular Franciscan. Take a deep breath and enjoy the ride that God has in store for you. Pace e bene!



PAZ Y BIEN

Mis queridos hermanos y hermanas, es tiempo de tener un momento de reflexión y pensar en lo que nuestro Santo Papa Benedicto XVI nos invita al entregar a todo el pueblo de Dios su carta "*Porta Fidei*" o sobre el "*Año de la Fé*" en la cual nos invita no solamente a conocer más sobre nuestra Fé sino sobre la manera de vivirla.

Nosotros como Franciscanos seculares, comprometidos no solamente con las enseñanzas de la Iglesia sino a vivir el Evangelio de nuestro Señor Jesucristo; tenemos que empezar a prepararnos para poder incluir estos mensajes y esta invitación no solamente de manera individual sino también dentro del proceso de formación de nuestras Fraternidades para que ayuden a nuestros hermanos a crecer todavía más en poder vivir su Fé.

Deseo compartir con ustedes unos párrafos de esa carta, invitándolos a que la lean completa, para poder incluir la invitación que nos hace en nuestra vida diaria y en el compartimiento de nuestra Fé con aquellos que no la conocen aún llamandose católicos.

" ... Deseamos que este *Año* suscite en todo creyente la aspiración a *confesar* la fe con plenitud y renovada convicción, con confianza y esperanza. Será también una ocasión propicia para intensificar la *celebración* de la fe en la liturgia, y de modo particular en la Eucaristía, que es «la cumbre a la que tiende la acción de la Iglesia y también la fuente de donde mana toda su fuerza»[14]. Al mismo tiempo, esperamos que el *testimonio* de vida de los creyentes sea cada vez más creíble. Redescubrir los contenidos de la fe profesada, celebrada, vivida y rezada[15], y reflexionar sobre el mismo acto con el que se cree, es un compromiso que todo creyente debe de hacer propio, sobre todo en este *Año*.

No por casualidad, los cristianos en los primeros siglos estaban obligados a aprender de memoria el *Credo*. Esto les servía como oración cotidiana para no olvidar el compromiso asumido con el bautismo. San Agustín lo recuerda con unas palabras de profundo significado, cuando en un *sermón* sobre la *redditio symboli*, la entrega del *Credo*, dice: «El símbolo del sacrosanto misterio que recibisteis todos a la vez y que hoy habéis recitado uno a uno, no es otra cosa que las palabras en las que se apoya sólidamente la fe de la Iglesia, nuestra madre, sobre la base inmovible que es Cristo el Señor. [...] Recibisteis y recitasteis algo que debéis retener siempre en vuestra mente y corazón y repetir en vuestro lecho; algo sobre lo que tenéis que pensar cuando estáis en la calle y que no debéis olvidar ni cuando coméis, de forma que, incluso cuando dormís corporalmente, vigiléis con el corazón»[16].

13. A lo largo de este *Año*, será decisivo volver a recorrer la historia de nuestra fe, que contempla el misterio insondable del entrecruzarse de la santidad y el pecado. Mientras lo primero pone de relieve la gran contribución que los hombres y las mujeres han ofrecido para el crecimiento y desarrollo de las comunidades a través del testimonio de su vida, lo segundo debe suscitar en cada uno un sincero y constante acto de conversión, con el fin de experimentar la misericordia del Padre que sale al encuentro de todos.

Espero que todos juntos podamos caminar y vivir de una manera diferente este año de la fe que se acerca y que de una manera especial nos ayude a buscar la santificación de nuestras vidas, dando testimonio de Don que Francisco de Asís nos ha regalado al habernos llamado a esta Orden.

Su hermano en Francisco y Clara

Bromando, OFS



Names of and contact information for Regional Council members and appointed chairs are available on the Regional website at www.stfrancisregion.org.

The Joy Of Francis

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